Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Famous Artists Course

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The Founding Faculty of the Famous Artists Schools

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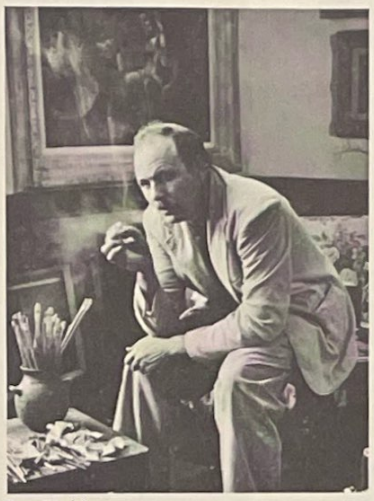
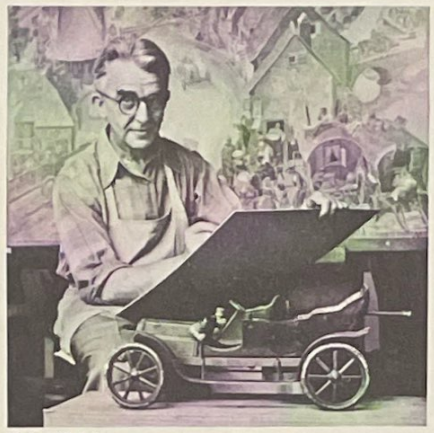


Ben Stahl



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Commercial art and illustration

Man drew pictures before he learned to write! Before you begin your Course in Commercial Art and Illustration, it is important that you become acquainted with the origin and development of pictures. So, let's go back many thousands of years to prehistoric times, when the art of picture making began.

The oldest pictures that we know of are found in caves in western Europe. They were painted by men of the Stone Age. These early men were hunters, and most of their pictures are of wild animals such as the reindeer, bison, and wild horse. Many of the animals are shown pierced by arrows, which suggests that the pictures were intended to bring the hunters luck in the chase. The people of the Stone Age had not learned to write yet – but already they could make drawings that, though simple, were realistic and full of vigor and meaning.

In time, man moved away from the life of the hunter and learned to till the fields, keep domestic animals, and build towns and cities. He began to write now, and the first letters he formed were actually pictures of objects, as Chinese writing still is today. As man's knowledge, experience, and materials improved, his art, too, rose to a higher level. His pictures were executed with remarkable skill – their colors were rich and varied, and so were their styles and techniques. Art was used to record events and human experience, to communicate ideas and influence people. Through pictures we can study the entire history and progress of mankind, from ancient times down to today. For art is a universal language that is much the same in every time and place.

In our own day the role of art has grown in scope and importance. The development of modern techniques of reproduction, printing and transportation now makes it possible to distribute a visual message to anywhere in the world in a matter of days or even hours. And so, art has become a more powerful universal language than ever before. As in the past, however, its ability to communicate ideas and to influence people still depends on the skill and creative talent of the well-trained artist.

Today advertising art and illustration have become a common visual language familiar to the people of a large part of the world. From the turn of the century, at least as far as America is concerned, commercial art has become part of every facet of our life. The story illustration – the advertising picture – the billboard – the window and counter display – the calendar and the magazine cover illustration – the greeting card and the mailing brochure – the list seems endless – are a source of information or pleasure to millions and millions of Americans. Pictures play the same role in our contact with the rest of the world, with peoples who do not understand our spoken or written language – but who most certainly understand our pictures.

The common ingredient of all good pictures is their quality of communication. If it is your intention to earn your living as an artist, then you must consider yourself in the field of communication. The reason for using pictures in every advertising or editorial effort is to sell goods or an idea. Commercial art is a business, part of a total selling effort – a commodity, if you will – bought for money – to be used in turn by its purchaser to make money. To achieve its purpose, it must communicate clearly and effectively.

The well-trained artist (and he must be well trained) who enters this field of art, with its special rewards of financial security, steady work, and the satisfaction of seeing his pictures reproduced, often nationally, must take on certain obligations. First, he must develop a sincere and healthy philosophy toward the use of his art. Second, he must realize that the buyer's interest in art for its own sake is secondary to his interest in its use to support his selling or communications effort. Third, he must learn about people – his client's audience and its reactions to art forms and symbols. And finally, accepting these considerations, he must produce good pictures that will not only reflect his own personality as a sincere artist – but will also deliver his client's message in a picture language that his audience will find convincing and easy to understand.

You must be a good artist

You are taking this Course because you want to make a career – or at least a part-time career – as an artist – a commercial artist – an illustrator – a designer or an art director – or perhaps you want to be a fashion artist or create art for television. No matter which area of art you eventually embrace, you must first of all become a good artist. To do this you are about to start on a course of training – a serious and demanding program of learning.

Learning and teaching are a joint effort. We can teach you – but you must do the learning. What you get from your Course will depend on how much you give to it in dedication, energy, and, most of all, self-discipline. This matter of discipline will be your greatest challenge for the duration of this Course. If you can make good use of your time and effort, and if you have even a small amount of talent and intelligence, we can make you a fine craftsman. If you can further add to this a strong habit of observation and creative curiosity, you may then become a real artist in all that the word implies.

We will teach you the traditional principles of drawing and painting which artists have developed over the centuries and handed down to us. We believe deeply that these fundamental artistic truths and techniques are the basic language and architecture of all sound picture making. You must learn and respect them if you hope to produce art that carries conviction.

After you have mastered the principles of drawing, form, composition, painting techniques, and all the other aspects of your training, it is our sincere hope that you will use your knowledge and skill to investigate many contemporary and

original approaches to your art. The most creative artists have always been those with open minds, an inquisitive attitude, and sensitivity to the constant changes going on in art – the new art forms and new ideas that are the vitality of contemporary picture making and design.

Everything you learn in your training will be important to you, no matter in what field of commercial art you eventually specialize. As an illustrator or advertising artist, you will need all of the skills and knowledge you acquire in your Course. As a designer, your knowledge of drawing, form, composition, and techniques will be just as important if your designs are to communicate and have meaning. As an art director responsible for designing the whole concept of the printed page and buying its art for your clients, you will have equal use for everything you learn. And the same will apply if you enter the field of fashion art or television – if you are to achieve a real degree of success.

Even if you eventually turn to photography – with a camera as your medium of expression – your knowledge of art and all the principles of composition, form, light, shade, and texture will make the difference between photographs that are mere recordings of nature and photographs that are works of art.

Your Course in Commercial Art and Illustration was planned, written, and illustrated, and is conducted by men who are recognized as the leaders in every area of the field today – in advertising art, illustration, design, fashion and television art. Their work appears constantly in all the current magazines, newspapers and on television – for major assignments of publishers and advertisers. They have proved by their own rich professional careers that they know the what, why, and how of making successful pictures.

It is our sincere conviction that the proper way to teach and study the art of making pictures is with pictures. Accordingly, we have followed the most modern methods of visual education in designing and writing the Course. There are thousands of clear, explanatory step-by-step photographs, diagrams, drawings, and paintings in your textbooks, so that you can quickly understand and absorb what the members of your Faculty are trying to teach you. The instructions are simple, direct, and always to the point – all the traditional ponderous clichés about art, all the irrelevant theories, have been left out.

This is the first time in the history of art teaching that such a course of training has been made available by such eminently qualified teachers.

First things come first

Please remember that you did not learn to write words until you first learned to make and understand the letters of the alphabet, and you did not write a composition until you first knew what the words meant – only then could you arrange them to make understandable thoughts. Similarly, you cannot make good pictures until you have a solid grasp of the essentials of art.

First things come first. Remember that we who are teaching you know from many, many years of experience what is necessary for you to know before you can hope to become a successful artist. All the things we will teach you in the succeeding lessons of this Course are absolutely necessary for you to master before you can become an able advertising artist, illustrator, or designer.

In every lesson of your training you will be given specific instructions and controlled exercises and assignments. However, at no time during the entire Course do we want you to feel that we are trying to control your creative or artistic talent. This must come from within yourself. We are simply trying to give you the guidance, the tools, the training and the knowledge you will need to achieve your creative ends and produce your own fine pictures.

Our responsibility – and yours

In starting this Course with the Famous Artists Schools you have committed yourself as an art student to our care, teaching, and guidance. We feel very keenly this responsibility and we will do everything we can to help you to succeed in your chosen field.

All through your training you will receive sincere, individual attention from artist-instructors who are specialists in every phase of the work you do and send in for criticism. We will try in every way to make you feel that we are close to you as teachers – and that your art problems are ours. Criticisms and gradings will be given in a fair, direct, and honest manner. We will not attempt at any time to soften a criticism just because we do not wish to hurt your feelings. It would do you no good if we did not tell you the truth. If, in our letters to you, we may at times seem severe, it is only because we are trying to teach you – not coddle you. It is quite difficult to get the friendship and warmth of close personal contact into a letter – but please believe that it is always there.

It would be quite simple and easy for us to constantly say, "Your work is good" – and save ourselves a lot of time and effort. And you would think, "What nice people they are." We must all, however, be honest and realistic if we wish to advance.

We have taken on the responsibility of teaching you, and we expect you to do your full share of the learning. If your work deserves praise, we will certainly enjoy giving it to you.

Commercial art and illustration can be the most satisfying and lucrative of careers. It can always be a great pleasure and satisfaction to you. There is no fuller life than that of the artist who – through his knowledge, training, and creative ability – produces, on a blank paper or canvas, pictures for the world to admire and enjoy. But do not confuse yourself about being that artist now. It must take many, many long hours and months and years of hard work, guidance, and training.

Only you – the artist – can be responsible for your own success. We can teach and guide you in the right direction. We want to be your trusted friends and counselors, but please do not forget one thing above all – you and only you, with your own sincere self-discipline, dedication, and effort, can make yourself

an artist. For, in the end, you will be your own best teacher.

Start to teach yourself now by learning to look at and see everything about you with a keen, observant eye. Thoughtfully examine the pictures in the magazines and newspapers. Study the endless parade of people and visual ideas on television. Examine with an open mind everything that is designed and printed. Styles in art and design change constantly. By being alert and inquisitive and sensitive to these constant changes and new trends going on about you, you will always be creatively aware and up to date in regard to new directions and experiments in art. Every successful artist will tell you this same story. There is no other key that will open the door to your success as an artist.

How good is your School?

Every once in a while someone asks us, "How good is your School?" Our answer is usually the same: "As good as our students make us." Perhaps this seems like a casual answer. It isn't.

Let's consider thoughtfully: What does make a good school? Fine teachers? Of course. A sound training program? Yes. Objectives of the highest character, and integrity toward its students? Very important. Yet how good are all these fine assets without students who take advantage of them?

A school can bring to a student the finest courses of learning and philosophies of teaching. It can place at his disposal the best teachers. But unless the student matches these advantages with an inquisitive mind, a willingness to learn, and the hard work and dedication that have always been a requisite for success in any field, neither the student nor the school benefits.

We have seen many swell-headed "geniuses" full of self-esteem —who took their talents for granted and felt no obligation to develop their gifts through study and investigation. These people make any school look bad. On the other hand, we know of countless people who, with just a modicum of talent — but a good deal of ambition, initiative, and capacity for hard work — have become highly successful artists. These are the people who make your School look good.

We can with pardonable pride remind you that your School is the best of its kind anywhere in the world. We have earned the respect and regard of leading art scholars and authorities in America. More than two hundred universities and residence art schools have placed at the disposal of their teachers and students alike the same textbooks you use. Virtually every major magazine, art journal and newspaper have written editorially about your School — its distinguished guiding faculties, its teachers, its teaching methods, and its successful students.

In spite of all this, you will still get from your association with us no more and no less than you put into it. You, in the final assessment, will make your Famous Artists Schools a poor school or a good school — and yourself a mediocre or a good artist.

Albert Dorne
PRESIDENT

Norman Rockwell

HAROLD VON SCHMIDT

Peter Helck

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Austin Briggs

Fred Ludekens

ALBERT DORNE

(Robert Fawcett)

(George Giusti)

How to study and practice

The twenty-four lessons of this Course are designed to carry you step by step, lesson by lesson, through every phase of art knowledge and technique necessary for the creation of sound pictures and design. The quality of your achievement by the time you have completed this Course will depend upon you and upon the amount of sincere practice and study you have put into your work.

More than once in the next months you will become impatient. You will want to start working on subjects discussed in lessons much more advanced than the one assigned you at the moment. You'll say, "Those later lessons look so interesting!" They are interesting – and we want to see you do a good job with them. Therefore, we advise you to be patient. From our past experience in developing even the most talented students, we know that "first things come first."

The first step when you begin a new lesson is to read the lesson through from beginning to end, studying the drawings and text very carefully. Then restudy the lesson as much and as often as necessary to make sure you understand every point.

The first lessons are among the most important of the entire Course. They teach you the fundamentals on which the more advanced training is based. They are so important that you must understand them well. If you do you will find the later lessons easier, and your artistic development will be faster and sounder. Each succeeding lesson will be more interesting than the last. More and more you will be drawing upon your creative talents as you learn how to make better and better pictures. But – please take our word for it – the first few lessons are the most important in the entire Course.

Your assignments

With each lesson you will be given an assignment. It will have two parts. The first part will outline problems to "study and practice." These problems have been designed to help you understand the teaching principles of the lesson and gain skill in drawing. It is a minimum outline. You should do as much additional work as possible because you learn to draw only by drawing. This practice work is not to be sent in for criticism.

The second part of the assignment describes the specific drawings which you are to send in to the School for constructive criticism and grading. These drawings will show us how well you have understood and learned the subject of the lesson. Do the assigned work as carefully as you can in a reasonable length of time, but don't be disappointed if you fail to turn out "masterpieces." You haven't had the necessary training yet, and we do not expect that your pictures at this stage will be as successful as you might wish.

Don't labor too long over one assignment. We are here to help you. We can be of most help to you when we see your work. Then we can tell you what you have done well and where you should try to make improvements – and show you how to make them.

How your work will be criticized

As you begin your Course it is important that you understand how we will judge and criticize your lesson assignments.

One of the great advantages of our teaching method is the fact that we make a direct, personal, and objective appraisal of your work as an individual. We judge your work and pictures, not only as art teachers, but also like the art director, who knows the kinds of pictures the general public responds to and advertisers and editors buy.

In criticizing every one of your assignments we will pay closest attention to your control of the subject taught in that particular lesson. We will also expect you to show that you understand and have remembered and applied what you studied in previous lessons. We will not criticize you for weaknesses in subjects which you have not yet studied in the Course.

At times you may receive a criticism that you consider unfair. For example, if we say that your drawing seems to have been done without sufficient preliminary study, you may be upset. Probably you spent a lot of time in preliminary work before making the finished picture. However, the important consideration is how you spent that time. In other words, are the benefits of your earlier lessons and preliminary drawings reflected in your finished work? Remember that all we can judge is what we see in your final pictures.

You should not be too worried if you do not master immediately all the things you study. As you may know, in learning to draw there are two steps. The first step is to gain a thorough understanding of the problem. The second step is to train your hand to put on paper what you have learned. This second step requires practice and time. You will find that many of the techniques you study in this Course will not be of full value until you have learned, after long practice, to apply them instinctively.

We hope to do two things when we criticize your assignments. First, we want to point out what you have done well. Second, we want to show you what you have not done well. Often we will talk more about your mistakes than about the things you have done successfully. This is as it should be. There isn't a great deal we need say about your strong points after we have noted them. It is different with your weaknesses. We must point them out to you and show you how you can correct them.

When you have finished this Course, you will be on your own, like all professional artists. Your ultimate success will depend to a large extent on your ability to see the weaknesses in your pictures and correct them. Always try to look at your drawings as objectively as possible. Imagine that you are criticizing the work of another artist—and be firm in your criticism.

How your work will be graded

When grading your drawings, we will purposely reserve the highest marks for very exceptional work. We know you are serious in studying this Course and want an honest and fair appraisal of your pictures. It would not be to your advantage if we coddled you by giving you higher grades than you deserve. You must learn to take our suggestions in the spirit in which they are given, remembering that our only desire is to help you.

We will grade your assignments as follows:

A — Excellent
B — Above average
C — Average
D — Below average

To get the most out of your Course you must study and practice as much and as regularly as you can. So, set up a work schedule for yourself and stick to it.

We know from experience that some students work faster than others, and some can give more time to their studies. On the other hand, your lessons are not all equally difficult. For that matter, a lesson you thought easy might be quite hard for someone else, and vice versa. There is no absolute standard of progress. All we ask is that you discipline yourself and work consistently. When you miss a day, try to make it up by spending extra time at your studies the next day. Your work periods should become a pleasant habit.

Do not work for speed — work for good results. Speed will come naturally after you have acquired the knowledge and skill that only practice can give you. You will find that it is comparatively easy to understand what should be done, but very much harder to do it. Theory is one thing, practical application is quite different. You must be patient, working slowly and carefully, so that you can train your hand to accomplish exactly the results you want to get.

Drawing is first of all a physical activity, just like playing tennis or golf. A good tennis player spends hours, day after day, practicing his serve, his backhand, and the other basic motions that he must master to play a serious match. The ambitious golfer practices his swing thousands of times, trying to make each motion more perfect than the last. In the same way the artist must spend hours and days learning to work with pencil, pen, and brush.

Remember, however, that practice will not produce the desired result unless you are constantly critical of what you are doing. You have heard of golfers who taught themselves to play, but found they could achieve only a limited amount of success. When they began studying with a pro, they had to begin all over again by unlearning the bad habits they had acquired through years of untutored playing. And it was harder to unlearn the bad habits than it would have been to establish good habits from the start.

Therefore, work slowly at first, thinking constantly of what you are doing, trying always to come closer to the ideal. With every line of the pencil or pen, every stroke of the brush, you will be developing facility — even though you may not realize it. Gradually you will be able to work faster and with assurance as you gain greater technical control. At the same time you will be establishing good habits, which will be your most valuable possession throughout the rest of your life.

When you send in your finished drawings to the School, be sure to follow the mailing instructions on the assignment sheet.

Send to the School for criticism and grading only those drawings specified in the assignment. Do not send in practice work or extra drawings.

Sketching

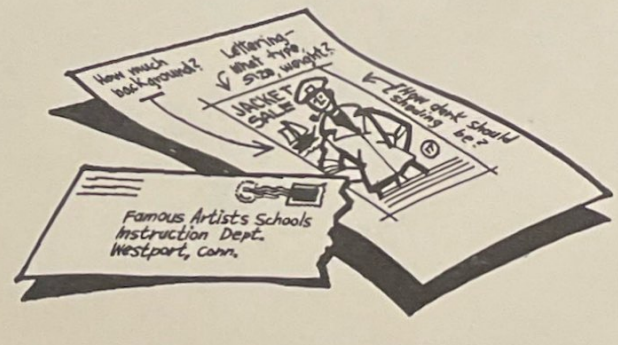
There is no substitute for drawing from life and nature. You learn to draw by drawing, so develop the habit of sketching. Carry a sketchbook with you at all times — one that will fit in your pocket. You will find numerous opportunities throughout the day for observing and recording rich material which will eventually be useful in making your pictures. Learn to make quick sketches of attitudes, characters of every description, gestures and facial expressions. It is equally important to note the interesting objects which surround you on every hand. There is no end to the marvelous wealth of picture material around you. Get — and keep — the wonderful sketchbook habit. You'll never regret it.

Commercial jobs while studying

It is quite likely that you may have opportunities, while studying your Course, to do commercial jobs for local tradesmen, stores, newspapers, and organizations — jobs for which you can expect to be paid. These are fine opportunities, and naturally you will want to make good in a "professional" manner. After all, experience is the greatest of teachers.

If at any time during your period of study you receive such jobs and you have not advanced in your Course to the point where the problems involved have been covered, write us about them. You may make a rough layout sketch of your job assignment on a sheet of paper measuring 8½ by 11 inches. Around your sketch make notes — as shown below — explaining where your difficulty lies. Fold up this sketch, insert it in an ordinary letter envelope, and send it to the School by first-class mail. Be sure to address it to the Instruction Department, and make certain that your name and address are on the sheet. We will then be glad to help you work out your problem from a professional point of view.

When you deliver your first jobs to your client, he may not think them quite as good as you do. Remember, he is paying for them. He is entitled to pictures that he feels will sell his product or deliver his message to his public. If you meet some disappointments — and you will — do not be discouraged. Offer to do your drawings over to his satisfaction. You will do better the next time. Just remember that all successful artists have gone through the same "growing pains," including all the members of your Faculty.



The artist's studio

The very first need of the artist is a "studio" or permanent working space. Find a well-lighted corner in your home where you can draw at any time – day or evening – without being disturbed. Your whole "studio" need not take up an area more than five feet by five feet.

Correct lighting

Having the proper light is very important. If possible, the window you select to work by should face north, since this provides the steadiest light. However, this is not essential. If your window faces another direction and the sun becomes a problem, the light can be controlled by window shades. For working at night or on dark days it is an excellent idea to attach a fluorescent desk light to the top of your drawing table. Or you can put up a swinging bracket light on the side of your window sash. If these lights are not available, an ordinary floor or bridge lamp with a bright bulb (at least 150 watts) will do very well.

The artificial light should be placed so that it will come from the same direction as your daylight. All light should come directly from your left, if you are right-handed (or directly from your right, if you are left-handed). This is very important, since what you are doing must have the full value of the light. Avoid having your hand or body throw shadows on your work.

Drawing board or drawing table

You should make all of your drawings on either a drawing board or drawing table. Standard drawing boards come in various sizes. They are usually about three-quarters of an inch thick and have a smooth surface. There are several good methods of working. One is to set the drawing board in your lap, resting it at an angle on the edge of an ordinary table about the size used in the kitchen. You will have room on the rest of the table for your working materials. Another good method is to prop up the drawing board on the table by placing books or similar objects under the back of it. The third and best method is to work on the adjustable type of drawing table used by professional artists. A tabouret or small table about thirty inches high, possibly with drawers in it, makes an excellent stand and storage space for materials.

Some artists cover their drawing table with a sheet of smooth dark green or gray cardboard (posterboard). This provides a firm, even drawing surface, absorbs any glare from overhead lights, and makes it easier on their eyes. The protective cardboard cover will also help preserve the surface of the drawing table. Don't cut paper or illustration board directly on your table. Do your cutting on old pad backs or cardboard.

In addition to the drawing board or table and tabouret, there are a number of other items which you will find useful in your study and work. A mirror – the larger the better – can be a real help. A three-panel mirror from an old dresser or vanity is particularly useful because it enables you to be your own model and view yourself in profile or even from the rear.

You may also find it helpful to hang or nail a bulletin board (a piece of thick, soft compressed fiberboard is an inexpensive substitute) on the wall directly in front of your drawing surface. On this board you can tack photos or other material you need for reference as you draw. A wastebasket is also important – be sure to have one handy for the work that you discard.

A good, logical arrangement of your tools and equipment can save you lots of wasted motion. Arrange your drawing table, tabouret, and other materials so that whatever you need is within easy reach. Know where everything is so that you need not stop work to hunt for what you want next. Do the best you can to make your studio setup convenient and comfortable, but don't waste any time or energy worrying over the fact that it is not perfect. Many fine drawings and paintings have been created under circumstances that were far from ideal. The important thing is to use your home studio as much and as often as you can.

Observation

All through your Course we will remind you of the philosophy "See – observe – remember." If you really understand the meaning of these three words and learn to apply them you will have accomplished a great deal toward becoming a good artist.

When the average man looks at something, he actually "sees" very little. He uses his eyes to identify objects, but that is usually as far as his curiosity takes him. For this reason, he lives in a world of limited observation. It is a simple world – made up of visual ideas like "tree," "girl," "house," "car," "stairs," "dress," "horse," etc. Suppose this man takes an afternoon walk. He may remember running into all these visual ideas; but since he did not observe them carefully, he usually cannot recall quite what they were like. Ask him to describe the house – he didn't notice. What was the girl wearing? Can't remember. Was the horse a work horse or a trotter? Must be a work horse – it was on a farm.

The chief quality of the artist is his insatiable visual curiosity. If an artist took that same walk, he would come back brimming with visual information. Not only would he have a clear visual picture in his mind of each object, and its setting, and its details – he would also be able to "see" in his mind's eye just what all these things really looked like.

Your ability to observe – to focus on what is significant and fix it in your memory – will, without any question, be one of your most important assets as an artist. It is the one ability which can help you to remember, to keep forever the things you have focused your attention on: objects – form – light and shade – characters – expressions of joy and sorrow – the material for your pictures.

Observation is the ability to see and mentally record with feeling and understanding not only the grand and the unusual, but the seemingly unimportant, commonplace things all about you – things which the untrained eye misses. It enables you to recognize and select the little things that are really the big things. It is the heart of the ability to report and record. All great writers, reporters, and artists show this ability to a marked degree in their work.

Success in art is not alone the result of fine craftsmanship or academic knowledge acquired over years of training and work. To this must be added the developed sense of observation that guides you to select the "right" subject to paint, the "right" types to draw, the "right" composition, the "right" color – to choose what you can use, and reject what is not needed.

Don't get the idea that a sense of observation is some mysterious quality possessed by only a few "blessed" people. Nothing could be further from the truth. Observation is, in fact, a definite ability that one acquires through constant and deliberate application and self-training.

The most important method for this training is to remember always to "see" everything you look at. Night and day – no matter where you are or what you are doing – work at developing the sense of awareness of everything about you. Don't just look at that sunset or that nice old barn. Study them. Remember their color, their shape and forms. This is observation!

What color and shape is the sofa in your living room? What is that characteristic gesture of your boss – or friend? What is the view from your window? Learn to see these things in your mind's eye. This is observation!

Don't just flip casually through picture magazines or look at the show on the television screen merely to be entertained. Observe the details of the figures, their actions and character, their mannerisms and gestures – backgrounds – objects. Think about them – and commit them to memory. This is observation!

Good observation is the first and most essential step to good drawing and painting. Throughout your Course we shall emphasize this ability and show you how to develop it – for only when you observe an object discerningly can you re-create it in a picture that viewers will find convincing and meaningful.

Recording your observations

While our motto or creed, see, observe, remember, is one of the most important things we can teach you, this does not mean that you can possibly commit everything you see to memory – or draw entirely from memory. It means simply that you should train your eye and mind so that when you do make your pictures you will be aware of and select the right things to draw – and recognize the nonessentials which should be left out.

In addition to seeing, observing, and remembering, you will need to develop a variety of sources of information so you can produce pictures which are authentic as well as artistic.

Whenever possible, make a personal inspection of any object or location you plan to use in a picture. Try to do this even if you have a photograph. Your picture will be more convincing if you can see and understand the real thing. When you actually handle an object you will understand its purpose and avoid embarrassing inaccuracies and mistakes in drawing it. If you do not understand the thing, get someone to explain it to you.

Your sketchbook. There is no substitute for drawing from from life—your sketchbook should be your constant companion. Sketching an object or scene will force you to observe more intensely and, later, when you review your sketches, they will recall many things to your mind that otherwise might be lost. Make sketches and notes of things you see which inspire you and give you the urge to paint them. Carry your sketchbook with you wherever you go – and use it!

Your camera. This is a wonderful aid in recording your observations. Whether you are taking pictures on a vacation trip or in familiar surroundings, you can gather much information and many picture ideas with your camera. When you study these photos they will refresh your memory about the things you have seen and the way you felt about them – they will mean more to you than photos taken by someone else.

Research makes the picture authentic

Research is an important part of your work as an illustrator or designer. You must be able to find the information you need on any subject you wish to depict. One picture you have to do may call for a peacock — another, a dueling pistol and costumes of the 1820's — another, an old mill, etc. Don't miss an opportunity to do something authentic and exciting merely because obtaining the material or the exact information to work from will involve extra effort. Be prepared in advance to draw anything.

Often a friend or even a casual acquaintance will know where you can locate the object you want. Make it a habit to jot down the name of your neighbor whose basement resembles a catacomb, the barber who collects stuffed animals, the location of that weeping willow. Perhaps a friend has an unusual house plant or porch chair. Make notes of such things for your files.

Time does not always permit you to locate each thing and study it firsthand, however, and you must rely to a large extent on information from sources such as books and photographs.

Reference books. Start a library of reference books on such subjects as birds, animals, costumes and other things that are likely to appear in your pictures. Add to this as your budget permits. Many useful pictures of objects can be found in mail-order catalogues and encyclopedias.

Your public library is a wonderful source for reference material. It will have a number of books on almost every subject and thus gives you a wide choice to refer to. Being familiar with the books on a subject also gives you a better reference background from which to select books for your own library. Your public library probably has many out-of-print books, costly reference volumes, and assorted magazines. Many libraries also have files of pictures.

"Scrap" file. You must develop a classified file of picture clippings from magazines, newspapers, catalogues, books, and many other sources. This file is called a picture "morgue" or "scrap" file. Making such a file is a time-consuming job, but you will be surprised at how much you will learn from this activity and what a marvelous timesaver it will become for you. In addition to being an excellent source of information, your file will be a rich source of picture ideas. You should start one as soon as you can, and you must always be adding to it. It will be one of your most valuable assets as a working artist.

The activity of selecting the pictures to include in your reference "morgue" can become a fine means for developing your sense of observation. In the usual process of looking through magazines, books, or other printed material that contains pictures, the average person is just a casual viewer — the pictures pass by, one by one, in a constant parade; they are merely recordings of things and places. But when you, the artist, go through these publications with a definite purpose in mind, it is quite different. The simple fact that you are considering each picture for a specific place or category in your morgue, or in relationship to your work, heightens your interest in the picture and the subject enormously. In order to decide whether it will be useful to you, you study for a few seconds a picture of a rooster or a horse — an unusual attitude of a man in a photograph — an interesting landscape or a picture of lovers on a park bench — a western character — and they cannot help but be impressed on your conscious or even subconscious mind. You have looked at, studied, and seen the picture objectively and in relation to your needs as an artist. Inevitably you retain something of it that will help you develop your sense of observation.

Remember never to trace or copy anything exactly from your files. Use these pictures for ideas and information, for getting the mood of the subject. This type of file contains copyright material, and copyright laws are rigidly enforced. Moreover, you want your illustration to be yours alone, not a rehash of something done by someone else.

How to start your "scrap" file

Your picture file is useful only if it is kept in an orderly way. The system we describe here can be started quite simply, but also can be expanded easily to include any additional classifications you need in years to come.

Here are the materials you need and advice on how to go about assembling and classifying your pictures:

The cabinet. A four-drawer steel filing cabinet is ideal. The drawers should work easily but it need not be the expensive suspension-type file or have a lock. It should be letter size rather than the large or legal size, as there is little advantage in the latter and it costs more. If you do not wish to buy a steel file at first, get the one-drawer, corrugated-board type known as a transfer file — or you can start with something as simple as a wooden box or even an orange crate.

The folders. They should be letter size and have tabs on the top to show what each folder contains. The most useful size tabs are "third cut" tabs, like those shown on page 14. The folders come in boxes of one hundred. Get heavyweight folders — they stand up better.

The labels. Although you can hand-letter directly on the tabs of the folders, gummed labels are desirable because they can be typed and renewed when necessary.

The tools. A knife of the razor-blade type, such as a mat knife, is best for cutting clippings. A heavier knife or a screwdriver is handy for removing the staples in magazines in order that the entire pages can be taken out without tearing. A large pair of scissors is good for clipping newspapers. A cutting board such as a Masonite panel will save your drawing board when you use your knife. Date your clipped sheets with a rubber date stamper so that later you will know what year a particular dress, car, or other product was in use. A sponge moistener will save you the bother of licking the gummed labels for the tabs.

Picture sources. Magazines, books, and newspapers are your picture sources. Almost any magazine containing photographs is worth clipping. The best ones, of course, are the picture magazines, the home and garden, fashion and travel publications. If

Here Al Parker assembles reference photos from his file for a picture assignment in which he will show articles ranging from boots and a wicker chair to handcuffs, guns, an old Buick, and a squirrel. Research to authenticate each thing in an illustration may take more time than you think necessary — but if the end result is a convincing picture the time spent is more than justified.

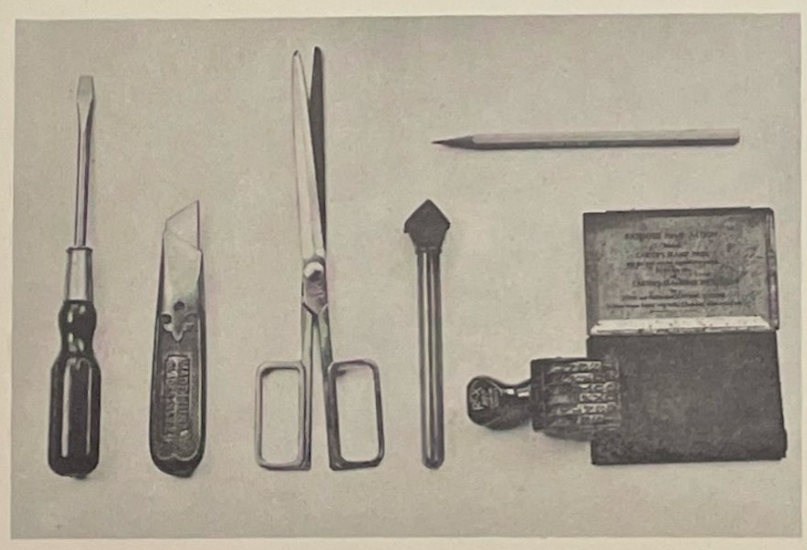
you file magazines without clipping and rely on the publisher's index or your memory, you will waste some of your most useful material. Always clip magazines. Many cheap and otherwise worthless books also would be more useful to you if you clipped the pictures. Newspapers are sources for such subjects as current events, fashions, auto accidents, sports, and countless other action pictures.

Your attic, basement, and closets, and those of your friends will yield enough magazines to start a file. In many cities there are shops which handle back issues of magazines at a lower price than current issues. Junkmen are good sources, and so are apartment house superintendents.

Clipping. Start by taking the magazine apart. Pry out the staples so that the pages can be removed without tearing. Some pictures will be too large for your folders. In such cases, fold them with the picture side out. If you must cut away any descriptive text, or if the caption does not identify the picture sufficiently, write on the picture the information about it that you have. One word, such as "Mexico" or "Victorian," may suffice. Date each picture with both year and month.

What to clip. Clip almost everything – not every picture, but every subject. You will not be interested in every subject you clip when you clip it, but you will be next month or next year if you have to make a picture of it. Clip photographs rather than the work of another artist. You might make an exception, however, in the case of an artist whose technique or point of view you admire. Most fashion photographs are less valuable for the fashions than for the chair used by the model or some other decorative note. Some photographs may seem too small or not sharp enough to be of value, but if you look closely you may find they are worth saving for some ideas they contain. Some intriguing pose, dramatic lighting effect, or unusual action may suggest a picture to you someday. Thus the file is used not only for reference but also for ideas and for suggesting the mood or atmosphere for your particular assignment.

Include in this file the names of people who can give you information to make your pictures ring true – doctors, florists, antique dealers, etc. Use it as an original idea file, too – a place to keep sketches and notes of things you have observed which inspired you and gave you the urge to draw or paint them.



The tools for making a clipping file —
Screwdriver
Mat knife
Scissors
Sponge moistener
Rubber-stamp dater
Pencil

How to classify

Good filing means putting your clippings away where you can find them when you need them. The idea is to make the putting away and the finding as simple as possible. The chart on the opposite page shows a good way to classify your material. At the start you will need no more than one folder for each general subject shown in Column A. As your file continues growing, you will have enough clippings to require further classification, as in Column B. Then, when your folders become crowded, you will want to reclassify your clippings into the more specific subjects listed in Column C. As your individual requirements become more clearly defined, other titles will occur to you and you will add to the list. When a folder becomes too fat, always reclassify — never make two folders on the same subject. For example, instead of having two folders labeled "Dogs," divide your dog clippings into breeds or into "Puppies," "Hunting Dogs," "Small Dogs," and "Large Dogs."

You will notice that the method of filing shown in the chart keeps all of the folders under one general subject together rather than having them scattered in an unrelated way, as they would be if all the subjects were filed purely alphabetically. A file which is purely alphabetical, with unrelated folders following each other, might read, "Airplanes," "Apes," "Art" — but this would ignore one of the main functions of the file, which is to suggest ideas to you. For instance, you may be looking for "Flowers" and see the nearby "Vines" folder, and it may occur to you that vines will suit your composition better than flowers.

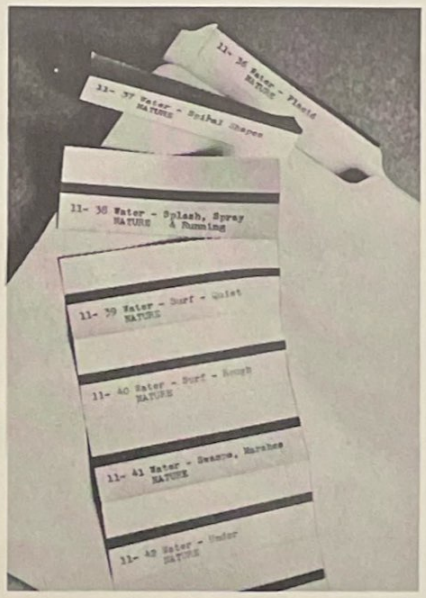
Filing suggestions. When you label your folders, on the first line put the subject title, such as "Dance" or "Ballet," and under that the general classification such as ENTERTAINMENT. File your folded pictures with the fold up — this makes them easier to leaf through. Make it a habit to file new pictures in one consistent position in the folder — either in front or back of the older ones. Then you can locate more easily the pictures which you recall filing recently. Do not permit pictures which you have removed from folders to lie around unfiled. The longer you delay placing them where they belong, the more difficult the task will be.

In front of each general subject keep a folder labeled "To Be Filed," into which you can place pictures newly clipped or removed from the file. This will keep them accessible until you have time to classify them further.

While the subjects in Column C will usually be filed in alphabetical order, there is no point in keeping the main divisions (Columns A and B) in that order. It is better to consider what your needs will be and keep the general subjects you use most where they will be most accessible. If you use a lot of, say, sports pictures, you will want them in the top drawer of your file. Similarly, it is wise to abandon alphabetical order occasionally in Column C. For instance, with ROOMS, you might place "Living Rooms" in front simply because it is used most often, and "Powder Rooms" next to "Bedrooms" because they are closely related.

Numbering. When your file grows quite large you will find it easier to replace pictures and folders if you give a key number to each subject in Column B and Column C of the chart, and also number each folder and picture accordingly. For example, the folder on fireplaces might be labeled "2-2 Interior, Fireplaces, HOUSING." If you later reclassify fireplaces into several folders by types, you simply keep the number 2-2 and add a letter for each folder, as 2-2a, 2b, 2c, etc. If you write the number of the folder on each picture in it (as 2-2, above), you will be able to replace the picture easily.

Al Parker's famous scrap file is very large and well ordered. It represents years of investment in time and effort. However, most professional artists manage very nicely with about three file cabinets of reference material.

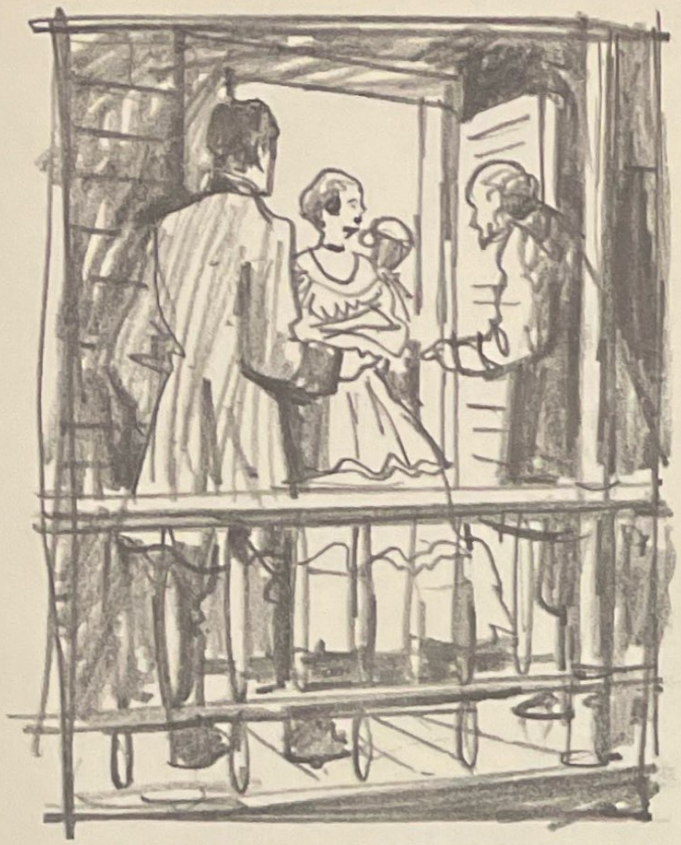

11- 38 Water - Splash, Spray
NATURE & Running
11- 39 Water - Surf - Quiet
NATURE
11- 40 Water - Surf - Rough
NATURE
11- 41 Water - Swamp, Marshes
NATURE

This close-up shows gummed tabs prepared for a portion of the general classification "Nature." Each tab will be placed on a separate folder. As you can see by the number of classifications shown, this would be a very large file.

This photo shows a portion of Al Parker's file. You will find that neat, orderly files like this will save you much time when you need it most. The tabs, one-third the width of the folder, are the most convenient size for labeling.

Chart for Making a File

COLUMN A	COLUMN B	COLUMN C
Housing	Exterior	Doors & Windows — Fences & Walls — Garages — Grillwork — Houses — Porches & Terraces — Stairs
	Interior	Doors & Windows — Fireplaces — Heating & Ventilating — Laundry — Stairs — Walls — Workshops & Tools
	Furnishings	ROOMS — Living Rooms — Dining Rooms —Bedrooms —Powder Rooms — Bathrooms — Kitchens — Closets — Halls
		PIECES — Chairs — Sofas — Tables — Chests & Cabinets — Desks — Furnishings by Periods — Outdoor Furniture
		DECOR — Lamps — Clocks — Mirrors & Frames — Screens — Silver — Table Service — Liquor Service
Nature	Gardens & Flowers	Flowers — Plants — Vines — Gardens — Garden Fixtures — Garden Tools
	Trees	In Blossom — With Leaves — Bare Branches — Bark & Trunk — Tropical
	Snow & Water	Ice — Snow — Water
	Miscellaneous	Clouds — Lightning — Rain — Mountains — Rocks
Animals	Domestic	Dogs — Cats — Cattle — Goats — Sheep — Rabbits — Rodents — Swine
	Wild	Bears — Camels — Deer — Elephants — Fox & Wolf — Lions & Other Cats — Monkeys
	Horses	Racing — Trotters & Pacers — Jumping — Running — Dude Ranch — Rodeo & Western — Work
	Miscellaneous	Birds — Fish — Fowl — Insects — Reptiles
Sports	Events	Auto Racing — Baseball — Basketball — Boxing — Bull Fights — Football — Hockey — Track
	Individual	Archery — Bowling — Camps & Picnics — Cycling — Fishing — Golf — Gymnasium — Hunting & Shooting — Tennis — Swimming — Skiing — Winter Sports
Transportation	Aircraft	Airplanes — Airliners — Airports — Helicopters — Parachutes
	Automobiles	Current — Foreign — Period — Station Wagons
	Boats	Cabin Cruisers — Canoes — Merchant Ships — Ocean Liners — Rowboats — Sailboats
	Public	Trains — Railroad Stations — Buses — Streetcars — Subways — Taxis — Luggage
	Miscellaneous	Trucks — Trailers — Wagons & Carriages — Filling Stations & Garages
People	Children	Babies — Boys — Girls — Teen Age — Playgrounds — Nursery Furniture — Toys
	Men	Angle — Full Face — Profile — Mature — Old — Bearded — Tough — Emotion & Expression — Positions
	Women	Angle — Full Face — Profile — Mature — Old — Emotion & Expression — Positions
	Miscellaneous	Embraces — Crowds — Famous People — Negroes — Nudes
Costume	Women's Fashions	Hats, Shoes & Accessories — Dresses — Suits — Coats — Lingerie — Jewelry —Rainwear — Furs — Hair
	Period	Ancient — 15th Century & Before — 16th Century — 17th Century — 18th Century — 19th Century — 20th Century
	Miscellaneous	Children's Fashions — Men's Fashions — Armor — Military — Royalty — Stage — Uniforms
Entertainment	Music	Drums — String — Wind — Symphony — Singers
	Dance	Ballet — Ballroom — Stage
	Theater	Theaters — Dressing Rooms — Hollywood
	Miscellaneous	Radio Broadcasts — Radio Control & Technical — Television — Night Clubs — Restaurants — Parties — Carnivals — Circus
Art & Science	Art	Art — Color — Composition — Sculpture
	Science	Medical — Hospitals — Dental — Laboratories — Astronomy
Industry	Stores & Offices	Barber Shops — Beauty Shops — Department Stores — Drug Stores — Food Stores — Offices — Banks — Wall Street
	Farming	Farm Houses — Barns — Farm Equipment
	Industry	Chemical — Construction — Dairy — Factories — Mining — Oil — Steel — Wood
Foreign	Europe	England — France — Germany — Italy — Russia
	Asia & Africa	China — India — Japan — Egypt — Africa
	Islands	Bermuda — Philippines — South Seas — West Indies
	Miscellaneous	Arctic — Australia — Canada — South & Central America — Mexico
Miscellaneous	Church & School	Church — College — School — Weddings
	Disaster	Explosion — Fire — Flood — Storm
	Government	Police — Prisons — Post Office — U. S. Government — City & State Governments
	Regional America	California — Florida — New York — Washington, D. C. — East — Middle West — South — West
	Street Scenes	Street Lamps & Fixtures — Street Scenes — Bridges & Tunnels
	Miscellaneous	Fabric Folds — Fabric Patterns — Fabric Textures — Flags — Food — Holidays — Newspapers — Photographers — Telephones — War



The photo at the right is a typical "information shot" to record the actions and details of the models. After making sketches (such as the one above) to establish his picture composition and the action of the figures, the artist posed his models and improvised his props. A sawhorse and wooden post represent the rail and tall stanchion of a river-boat deck. The door was borrowed from a neighbor and the costumes were rented. In addition to this over-all shot the artist took close-ups of the models to record details. River-boat pictures from his scrap file furnished information he needed to paint an authentic scene.

Models, props, and photographs

In the early lessons of the Course you will be learning how to draw figures, heads, and hands so that they look real and have convincing action. As you study and practice, you must become increasingly observant of the people around you. You must apply what you are learning to real people. Models to study and draw from are readily available – your family, friends, the man at the filling station, the schoolboy next door – and yourself, in the mirror. Draw from live models every chance you get. Most people will be pleased and flattered to pose for you and you will be developing your powers of observation.

As you draw from these models you will discover the marvelous variety of actions, mannerisms, and expressions that the human family is capable of and the details that make up different character types. You will, or should be, tremendously impressed by what you see – the solidity of the form, the graceful or forceful gesture throughout the figure, the calm dignity of an older person, etc. – and you should work to capture these things in your drawing. You must think and feel as you draw – not merely make a casual copy of what you see. You must learn to select and emphasize the important shapes and details and eliminate the unimportant and the trivial. It's up to you to interpret with meaning the significant things you see in the model – those things which really say something to the viewer. Much of your Course is devoted to teaching you how to do this.

Intelligent use of models will help you to solve many problems in your illustrations – the tilt of a head, the drape of clothing, the gesture of an arm, the way the light strikes the forms. The study of actual people will give your work conviction and help you avoid the stiff, lifeless poses that often result if you rely solely on your memory.

Costumes and props

It is a great help to pose your models in costumes as close as possible to those you will show in your pictures. Many artists build up a collection of various types of hats, boots, coats, etc., to use in posing their models. You will not always have the exact article you need, but if you choose an appropriate one to give you the proper lines and draping, you can make the necessary changes in your drawing with the help of information from your research file or reference books.

Just as with costumes, it is always best to use authentic props to draw from. Keep a list of people you know who have guns, stuffed animals, sporting equipment, or other props you are likely to need in your pictures. You will find that most people are glad to help you locate what you need.

Of course it is not always possible to find the real article and you must often use imagination and ingenuity in making substitutions. For instance, you may have to pose your model on a sawhorse or the back of a sofa instead of a real horse – a broomstick may serve as a medieval lance – in another picture a plastic model may replace a real pistol. Most illustrators acquire an amazing collection of miscellaneous articles to use in this way.

Photographing the model

It is seldom practical to have models pose for the long hours it takes to produce a finished picture. This would be inconvenient and, in the case of professional models, too expensive. Many artists use the camera to record the information they need from their models. Also, the camera can capture many actions, poses, and attitudes—both subtle and violent—that your model could not hold long enough to be of any use to you. With the camera you can record the myriad details and fleeting expressions which would be hard to remember.

Of course it is best to try to find a model who most nearly fits the type of person in your illustration, but this is not always possible. You will find, however, that you can create many types from the same model, as we shall explain in detail later in the Course. In fact, you will probably pose for many of the characters in your pictures yourself.

When working with models you must be a sort of movie director to get the most from them. Sometimes it may be difficult at first to get a model to lose his self-consciousness and act the part you want him to, but you will find that almost anyone can pose effectively if given enough encouragement and the proper direction. The most important thing to keep in mind when posing a model is that you yourself must know what you want. Before taking any picture you should make a number of preliminary sketches to decide on the action, expression, mood, lighting, etc. You should then thoroughly explain to the model what the picture situation is – what he is supposed to be doing – what he is supposed to feel. It is a good idea to take the pose yourself and show him what you mean. When you yourself "get into the act" it helps relieve the model's embarrassment and gets him into the spirit of the thing. Don't hesitate to tell jokes, shout, ham it up – anything to get the poses you need. It is best to take a number of pictures for each pose. You may find that in one the body gesture is good, another may have better expression, or action in the hands. You can then get the information you need from the different shots.

Equipment

You can start with whatever type of camera is available to you. The reflex camera is popular with illustrators, and there are a number of reasonably priced ones on the market. The Polaroid Land Camera is also popular, as it produces a picture in a minute and you can see immediately if you have the information you need. Many top illustrators use expensive cameras such as the Rolleiflex, Leica, Contax, or Speed Graphic, but it is not necessary, particularly at the start.

You can shoot many of your pictures out of doors, being careful to choose a time when the light is appropriate for the pictures you wish. You will find, however, that you can control your lights and shadows better indoors using artificial lights. The simplest way to start is with two or three reflector-type bulbs. They come in different types: "flood" for general lighting, "spot" for concentrated lighting, and "medium beam," which is in between the two and is the most useful in shooting single figures. These bulbs can be used in simple lighting fixtures such as bridge lamps and desk lamps, or you can purchase inexpensive "clamp-on" lighting fixtures. These are quite versatile, as they can be clamped onto a door or piece of furniture to place the light at the desired height. If you wish to invest in studio lighting equipment your camera store can give you advice and literature on the subject. Naturally, just as with cameras, the more expensive equipment gives you more versatility and control, but you can get excellent results with the simple equipment described above.

Lighting the model

Keep your lighting as simple as possible. As a rule, you will have one main light to create the desired lights and shadows. Move this light around until it gives you the effect you have decided on in your preliminary drawings. A second fill-in light placed near the camera will help retain some detail in the shadow areas of the figure. Be sure that this light is not close enough to the model to break up the definite pattern of light and shade created by your main light. An exception would be if your picture calls for some type of unusual or tricky lighting.

A light background behind the model will help retain detail around the outline of the figure. A light-colored wall, screen, or door is fine. If your background is confused or cluttered you can use a white cardboard or bedsheet. A separate light directed onto the background from beyond the model will eliminate unwanted shadows there. As a rule this is not necessary, though.

Working from photos

The way you eventually use models and the extent to which you use photography will depend on your own working habits and needs. Some artists prefer not to use photographs at all, except to authenticate technical details, landscapes, etc. Others find photographs an extremely useful aid in producing their pictures. Some take their own pictures and do their own darkroom work, while others pay professional photographers to take shots under their direction. Norman Rockwell is one who has all his photographic work done by someone else. He feels that this leaves him free to devote his entire attention to directing his models. Austin Briggs and Jon Whitcomb prefer to do their own photographic work. Harold Von Schmidt, on the other hand, does not photograph his models at all. He draws and paints directly from life.

A word of advice

The camera is a useful servant but it can also be a very bad thing if you allow it to become your master. The purpose of the camera is to furnish you with information to study and select from. Don't make the serious mistake of thinking that tracing a photograph is a substitute for good drawing. Many an artist has lost his creative individuality by becoming too dependent on photographs, relying on them so much that he loses touch with the fundamentals of drawing and composition. Always remember that before taking photos to help you with an illustration, you must compose and plan your picture, sketch in just what action and mood you want to portray, decide what lighting will be best to accomplish this, etc. After taking your photographs you must be able to use or reject anything you see in them according to the needs of your picture. Throughout the Course you will see examples of how photographs should be used.

Photographs can give you lots of useful information and save you much time but they don't create pictures – you do. Don't become a slave to them – a mere photograph tracer. Always remember, you – not the camera – are the artist. You learn to draw by drawing – not tracing.

In this discussion of filing, photography, costumes, etc., we have touched on a number of subjects that may not concern you immediately. Our aim has been to give you a clear, complete picture of the studio set-up and working procedures of the professional artist – to furnish you with facts you can come back to whenever you need them.

You are now entering upon the study of a Course that you will find both exciting and enriching. This same Course has shown many serious students before you the way to a happy, creative career in art. We hope that it will do the same for you.

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